



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



NEW LAW ALLOWS FOR VETERAN DESIGNATION ON DRIVERS LICENSE

Effective July 1, 2012, the state of South Dakota will now provide a designation on driver's licenses for honorably discharged veterans. South Dakota now joins several other states which have added the 'veterans designation' to their driver license making it easier for veterans to prove their status at the numerous hotel chains and retail outlets that offer veterans discounts.

"The new feature gives veterans an easy way to show proof of their veteran status, which is not always an easy task," said Steve Harding, Deputy Secretary for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

To add the designation to a license or ID card, veterans can visit any South Dakota driver license office. Locations of the driver license offices can be found at: http://dps.sd.gov/licensing/driver_licensing/exam_schedule.aspx. Veterans will need to present their DD-214 which shows their honorable discharge from active duty or a certificate signed by a County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer verifying their veteran status.

Other documents required to obtain a driver license can be found at: http://dps.sd.gov/licensing/driver_licensing/obtain_a_license.aspx.

Veterans, who need to obtain a copy of their DD-214, may request it through their County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer. A complete list of service officers, their contact information and their office hours can be found at http://mva.sd.gov/vet_service_officers.html.



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SDNG PARTNERS WITH CHARACTER COUNTS TO RECOGNIZE STUDENTS

Soldiers from the South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug program teamed up with Character Counts to recognize Southwest Middle School students for their citizenship characteristics May 3 in Rapid City.

For the past seven months, the SDNG has been a partner with Character Counts and Southwest Middle School. Character Counts is an educational framework for teaching universal values and a national coalition of organizations that support each other. The program follows six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, citizenship, caring, fairness and responsibility.

The students were honored in front of their peers as their names were read aloud and the reasons why their teachers chose them as a student of great character.

The soldiers presented the students with a certificate, a military dog tag with their name engraved on it and a U.S. Army Values coin.

"The coin is a tradition that is used in the military to award soldiers for excellence," said Col. John Holter, director of operations for the SDNG, as he talked to the students. "We have our own values that we follow, which are very similar to the six pillars of Character Counts. I encourage you to put it in your pocket; that is where I keep mine and every time I reach into my pocket I am reminded of the Army values.

Holter reminded the students that the traits in the Character Counts programs are great for their future success. "It is important to do these things in front of your teacher and peers," he said. "However, what will really make you successful in high school, college and your career is to continue to do these things when no one is looking, and that will make you a really great person."



WEAKLAND NAMED FALL RIVER CVSO

Wendy Weakland has been selected as the Fall River County Veterans Service Officer. Her office, located in Hot Springs, will be open 9:00 am—5:00 pm Monday through Friday.

Wendy's email address is veterans@gwvc.net and her phone number is 605-745-5416.



GOVERNOR'S MANSION TOURS BEGIN JUNE 6

First Lady Linda Daugaard has announced that weekly public tours of the Governor's Mansion will begin on Wednesday, June 6. "Dennis and I are pleased to welcome visitors to see this beautiful home," Mrs. Daugaard said. "It is an honor to live here, but we want to share it with all South Dakotans because it belongs to them."

This is the second summer that public tours will be offered at the Governor's Mansion. Beginning June 6, weekly public tours will be conducted each Wednesday in June, July, and August (with the exception of July 4, Independence Day; no tour that week). The 30-minute tours, for groups of up to 30 people, will begin at 10 a.m. CDT, 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m., and will be conducted by volunteers, including the First Lady. Tour tickets must be obtained in advance from the Pierre Chamber of Commerce. Those people interesting in arranging a tour should call the Chamber of Commerce at 605-224-7361.



VA ELIMINATES COPAYMENT FOR IN-HOME VIDEO TELEHEALTH CARE

Beginning May 7, the VA will no longer charge veterans a copayment when they receive care in their homes from VA health professionals using video conferencing.

This change will primarily benefit veterans with limited mobility, such as spinal cord injury patients. Whenever medically appropriate, the VA will make the home the preferred place of care for veterans to ensure timely and convenient access to the VA services. For more information about telehealth, visit: <http://www.telehealth.va.gov/>.

Data has shown that expanded use of technology in the home enables patients with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, chronic heart failure and hypertension, to live independently, actively engage in managing their health, and prevents avoidable hospitalization of patients who otherwise may need long-term institutional care.

Home telehealth does not replace the need for nursing home care or for traditional noninstitutional care programs. However, it enhances the ability for many veterans to better understand and manage chronic diseases. This partnership with their care team helps delay the need for institutionalization and enables them to maintain independence for an extended period of time, thus improving their overall quality of life.



HENDERSON RETURNS FROM DEPLOYMENT

Heather Henderson, Veterans Service Officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, has returned home after a six month deployment to England in support of contingent operations for the Air National Guard.

During her deployment, Heather worked in the engine management office. Her main duties were scheduling, tracking, ordering parts, trouble shooting, records keeping and trending diagnostics on the assigned Pratt Whitney jet engines for both the unit and deployed groups.

"It was a great opportunity for me to work along side my active duty counterparts," said Henderson. "I learned a lot of new things regarding my job with the Air National Guard."

While on her deployment, Henderson had the opportunity to travel throughout England including Stonehenge, London, and Bath. She made trips to Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Ireland.

"It was an amazing trip and I was fortunate to be chosen for this opportunity," said Henderson. "I am happy to be back to work in the claims office and ready to serve our great state's veterans."



SWANSON JOINS DEPARTMENT TEAM

Kevin Swanson has joined the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Team and will serve as the Veterans Field Officer for western South Dakota. Kevin will spend the first few months in training and will be traveling with Kevin Bowen and Steve Oliva.

Kevin served in the United States Army for four years and has worked for the State of South Dakota for the past 13 years, most currently serving with the Department of Social Services Child Protection Services.

Kevin is a Pierre native and he and his wife Shauna partake in many of the communities outdoor activities (fishing, hunting and riding their motor cycle).

Kevin is excited about this opportunity to work with and assist South Dakota veterans and their families in receiving the benefits and services they have earned.

"We are excited to have Kevin as part of our team," said Deputy Secretary Harding. "His personal contributions and dedication will assist the Department in our mission to enrich the lives of veterans and their families."



NESS TO BE INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME

For Yankton's Larry Ness, South Dakota truly is a special place. "We have some resilient, strong people in South Dakota," Ness said. "We are responsible to our families and our communities. That's what makes South Dakota great."

Ness, the CEO and chairman of the board of First Dakota National Bank, has spent much of his life contributing to the growth and development of his beloved state. Because of those contributions, the South Dakota Hall of Fame recently selected him as a member of its 2012 class.

Ness grew up on a Brookings County farm and studied economics as South Dakota State. Before coming to Yankton, he worked as a bank examiner and commercial lender at Mitchell National Bank and as executive vice president of First National Bank in Volga. In 1983, he became president of First Dakota National Bank in Yankton, and he held that position until stepping down in 2010.

Along with serving for 24 years in the South Dakota National Guard, Ness has given his time to numerous state boards and agencies, including the South Dakota Art Museum, the National Music Museum and the Center for Western Studies.

The South Dakota Hall of Fame was specifically founded to recognize and honor pioneers and outstanding leaders who have contributed to the development and heritage of South Dakota. It is the only resource dedicated exclusively to the preservation and extension of the state's heritage, and more than 600 South Dakotans have been selected for recognition since the Hall of Fame was established in 1974.

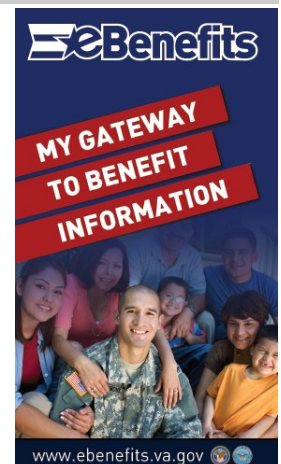
The Hall of Fame will celebrate the lives of the 2012 inductees at this year's annual honors event in Chamberlain/Oacoma on Sept. 7-8. Detailed information can be found on the Hall of Fame's website — <http://www.sdhalloffame.com>.



EBENEFITS

eBenefits (www.ebenefits.va.gov), an important joint VA/DoD website, allows users to access their VA and DoD benefits, claims and military documents online.

The VA has developed an electronic eBenefits toolkit with important information and promotional materials to support this effort. The toolkit materials are now final and can be found at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/pages/PromotionalMaterials>. Many of the materials can be customized with your respective contact information.



Upcoming Events

May 11-13—DAV 73rd Annual Department of SD Convention—Brookings
May 12—60th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Display—Brookings
May 16—Vietnam Veterans of America State Convention—Pierre
May 19—Armed Forces Day
May 28—Memorial Day
Jun. 7-10—VFW State Convention—Brookings
Jun. 9—Marine Corps League Department of SD Convention—Pierre
June 9-23 Golden Coyote Annual Training Exercise
Jun. 10-12—Dare to Dream Conference—Spearfish Holiday Inn
Jun. 14—Flag Day
Jun. 14-17—American Legion State Convention—Watertown
July 11—SD Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post 15—Sioux Falls—10:30 am.
July 21-22—Sioux Falls Air Show
Aug. 27-29—VSO Annual Benefits School—Pierre

VOLGA TO BE CAPITAL FOR A DAY

Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced that Volga has been chosen to be South Dakota's Capital for a Day on June 13. "I look forward to the Volga event, and thank community leaders for offering to host it," Gov. Daugaard said. "It's an excellent opportunity for me to get better acquainted with them and more informed about local issues and the future of the Volga area."

The Governor and a small delegation of state officials will have a coffee and constituent hour and tour Volga in the morning. Roundtable meetings with business and community leaders will also be held.

"We are thrilled to host Capital for a Day and welcome the Governor and First Lady Linda Daugaard and staff to Volga on June 13," said Mayor Mary Bjerke. "It is a tremendous opportunity to showcase our beautiful city and discuss the potential for economic growth."

A complete agenda will be released at a later date.

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